Supply of poor quality foodgrains to Rajasthan

963. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Government of Rajasthan had brought to the notice of the Central Government of the poor quality of foodgrains supplied to it during the drought last year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, Government's reaction to the statement made to the media by the Rajasthan officials; and

(d) what steps were taken by Government to ensure that the goodgrains supplied to the drought affected State are of good quality?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER ARRAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA): (a) to (d) Good quality foodgrains conforming to PFA standards and three from insect infestation are issued to State Governments/UT Administrations for distribution under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and other welfare schemes. Ample opportunities are provided to the officials of the State Governments/UT Administrations to inspect the stock prior to lifting from FCI godowns. Therefore, there are minimal chances of supply of poor quality of goodgrains. A few State Governments including Rajasthan had shown their reluctance for the supply of lustre lost wheat under TPDS. Lustre lost wheat is at par with sound wheat, so far as nutritional value is concerned. Keeping in view the reluctance of State Governments towards lustre lost wheat, its supply was stopped to State Governments from 6th August, 2002.

The following additional steps have been taken by the Government to ensure that the foodgrains supplied to the States including drought-affected States are of good quality:—

(i) Instructions have been issued to all the State Governments/ UT Administrations that an officer not below the rank of Inspector should be deputed to check the quality of foodgrains before their lifting from the FCI godowns.

(ii) The samples of goodgrains are jointly drawn and sealed by the officers of the State Governments/UT Administrations and the FCI during the issue of stocks from FCI godowns for display at the counters of Fair Price Shops (FPSs).

(iii) The officers of the State Governments' and the Ministry conducted surprise checks of the FPSs to over see the quality of foodgrains being distributed through TPDS.

(iv) The officers of the Department designated as 'Area Officers' for monitoring the TPDS work in the respective States also undertake visits to the storage depots and the FPSs, during their visit to the States to check the quality of foodgrains being issued.

Scrapping of Essential Commodities Act

964. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering FICCI Task Force recommendations on scrapping the Essential Commodities Act in order to make Indian agricultural products globally competitive; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Extension of Antyodaya Anna Yojana

965. SHRI RUMANDLA RAAMACHANDRAYYA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether in order to relieve the economic burden from the destitute senior citizens and tribals Government have decided to provide them foodgrains at a subsidized prices;

(b) if so, whether his Ministry's decision to extend the Antyodaya Anna Yojana from one crore to two crores among estimated number of Below Poverty Line families in the country came as they could not be